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**KYRGYZSTAN**

## CASE STUDY

# Farmers Learn New Techniques

**USAID-supported association introduces new, more profitable agricultural practices in Kyrgyzstan.**



More than 1,300 farmers annually attend demonstrations by the USAID-supported association to learn about new agricultural technologies. Photo: Mahabbat Alymkulova

***“Now we are looking for information on new technologies ourselves, as it improves the quality of our lives.”***

- Asanov Nimatulla, a farmer from Kara-Su village.

### Challenge

Following the fall of the Soviet system, Kyrgyz agricultural businesses lost not only their markets for produce, but networks that provided quality seeds, fertilizers or crop protection products. For years, Kyrgyz farmers struggled with poor quality seeds and unavailable or very costly fertilizers and pesticides. Despite their hard work, earnings from agriculture were low; farming was unprofitable.

### Initiative

In 2002, with assistance from USAID, agro-businessmen in southern part of the country formed the Association of Agrobusinessmen of Kyrgyzstan (AAK). The association set out to create an opportunity for farmers and agrobusinesses to cooperate in procurement and distribution of quality seeds, fertilizers, and crop protection products. USAID helps the association conduct demonstrations of new crops and agricultural techniques in the various oblasts (districts) of southern Kyrgyzstan. These demonstrations enable farmers to see the crops in the field and obtain first-hand information about their care from specialists. The association presents different varieties and hybrids of wheat, maize, potato, cotton and vegetables, seeds for which are obtained from different local seed companies as well as international organizations.

In addition to the presenting crops, fertilizers, and crop protection products in the field, demonstrations include seminars on comparative advantages of new technologies. Participants have the opportunity to evaluate the results of new crops and compare them with traditionally grown ones. Interested farmers can purchase the seeds of demonstrated crops at AAK farm stores and seed farms.

### Results

In 2005 alone, the association carried out nine demonstrations in three oblasts. These demonstrations provide farmers with information on modern ways to increase productivity and profitability from their land. Annually, such demonstrations are attended by more than 1,300 male and female farmers, seed dealers, AAK members, representatives of state seed department and international organizations. “In Soviet times we used to have other people think for us. Now we are independent, we can choose our own way of life,” says Asanov Nimatulla, a farmer with 30 years of experience.